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Hunsaker, Lewis

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*U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Lewis Hunsaker*

## Latest SGL Welcomes NPS Alumnus and Well-Known Cartoonist, CAPT Jeff Bacon

*By MC1 Lewis Hunsaker*

Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) welcomed NPS Alumnus and retired Capt. Jeff Bacon for its latest Secretary of the Navy Guest Lecture (SGL) in King Auditorium, July 11. Bacon talked about his time at NPS and various departments through a series of military cartoons, that he has become known for over the years, before focusing his speech on service and the future.

“It’s a thrill to be here. I used to sleep right back over there, said Bacon.” Pointing to a back part of the Auditorium and receiving a curious of laughter for the joke. “Coming here is a dream come true. It’s something that I dreamed about for many many years.”

So why are you here at the Naval Postgraduate School, asked Bacon?

“When I was a student here the only thing I focused on was getting past the next exam, softball, and golf, but not necessarily in that order,” said Bacon.

Bacon explained that he never truly understood the importance of NPS until years after he graduated from the school.

“Something interesting happens when you come to this school, you change. You have spent almost your entire career working with the same community. People that look like you, dress like you, talk like you, and now you are thrust into an august group at the Naval Postgraduate School,” said Bacon.

You may be an Aviator, Subs or even a Surface Warfare Officer (SWO) like I was, added Bacon.

“I spend almost my entire career as a Surface Warfare Officer,” said Bacon. “In fact, it was all I really wanted to do. My dad was on ships in World War II and the allure of that life drew me in. When I got my first ship USS Cook (FF-1083) I realized that it’s hard being a SWO. But it’s hard everywhere in the military.”

During this time, as 21-year old SWO, Bacon realized a few things about himself and the Navy. “To be successful you have to work hard and know your stuff,” said Bacon. “And why is that? Because Sailors that work for you expect it of you. They expect you to be proficient and wise, lead by example and be technically competent which I believe is one of the reasons you are here at NPS to make you smarter.

“If you are technically competent, you are better equipped to make good decisions. During the course of your career you will have to make some tuff decisions, sometimes unpopular ones, decisions that keep your troops safe, and I believe that NPS prepares you for that,” Bacon added.

Bacon stressed the importance of collaborating with members of every branch of the armed forces and international students during their time at

NPS.

“So why are you here, Bacon asked again? To become technically competent, to widen your perspective, to think of other services and allied nations as members of the same team, and to become better leaders in the process.” [If you do these things] “I will guarantee that you will leave here as a different person. You ladies and gentleman you are the protectors.”

Bacon then reflected on the events of 9/11, when the entire Navy was told to get underway, on both coasts.

“A lot of people saw the ships leave but what they didn’t know was that those ships formed an unbroken protective bubble around the coastline of the United States,” said Bacon.

One of the ships the USS George Washington (CVN 73) was sent to the waters off Manhattan. “Imagine being there that day ... and as you look out to sea there on the horizon is the unmistakable silhouette of U.S. Navy warship,” said Bacon. What would you feel at that moment? Relief, hope, or maybe that things would be ok?

“That feeling is what you mean to this country. That feeling is what you mean to the people of the world. You represent a country that’s founded on life, liberty, and the pursuit of all who threaten it.

“The world is watching, waiting, and hoping for leaders and of all of the men and women in this country and around the world that could be sitting in the audience today. You are the ones that our nations have selected to lead us into the future. You are the people that are here to protect us,” concluded Bacon.

Bacon's first Navy Times cartoon was published in March 1986. By the end of that year, the panel was titled “Broadside” and has appeared weekly ever since. In 2006, his Marine-oriented cartoon “Greensid” began its run in Marine Corps Times.

NPS’ SGL program provides a series of professional lectures by senior